



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 25, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.637.5603  
Jolene Holgate | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

**Law and Order Committee approves legislation to  
allow alcohol sales on casino floors in the state of Arizona**

*Legislation moves on to the Naabik'iyátí Committee for consideration*

**WINDOW ROCK** – The Law and Order Committee on Monday approved Legislation No. 0165-13, seeking to amend Title 17 of the Navajo Nation Code to allow the sale and consumption of alcohol on casino floors owned by the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Mel Begay (Coyote Canyon, Mexican Springs, Naschitti, Tohatchi, Bahastl'a'a') urged LOC members to support the bill in an effort to promote economic development for the Nation.

"The gaming industry is very competitive and in order for us to compete at a high level, we need to adjust some laws that we have in place," said Delegate Begay.

NNGE CEO Derrick Watchman explained that the proposed amendment would not affect Navajo casinos currently operating in the state of New Mexico due to restrictions in the New Mexico Gaming Compact that prohibit the sale of alcohol on casino floors throughout the state.

LOC vice chair Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat) expressed concern over regulation and enforcement of alcohol sales.

"How are we going to prevent people from consuming alcohol outside of the casino, or prevent people from bringing in liquor from outside the casino?" asked Delegate Shepherd.

In response, Watchman and general counsel for NNGE Ray Etcitty, assured LOC members that the NNGE is bound to strict policies from the Arizona Gaming Compact and the Arizona Department of Liquor Licenses and Control, that specifically outline regulations regarding the sale of alcohol.

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) voiced concerns over the possibility of increased domestic violence and other crimes as a result of expanded alcohol sales.

"We talk about economic development for the Nation, but you also have to consider the victims in our communities," Delegate Yazzie said.

Delegate Yazzie urged LOC members to reconsider the legislation after the NNGE establishes a proposed liquor sales tax, referencing a report received by LOC members from executive director of the Navajo Tax Commission Martin Ashley, prior to the legislation discussion.

The proposed liquor sales tax would be separate from the current five-percent Navajo Nation sales tax and the tax revenue would benefit public safety and social services on the Navajo Nation, according to Ashley.

LOC member Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) suggested the sale of alcohol on casino floors be limited to the Twin Arrows Navajo Resort Casino, and reiterated the need for NNGE officials to be very cautious in serving alcohol to casino guests.

After an hour of discussion, LOC members voted 4-1 in support of Legislation No. 0165-13.

The legislation now moves on to the Naabik'íyátí Committee for consideration.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)